

THE BALCONY

John Bartley, noted criminal investigator, recently returned from Secret Service work during the war, is asked by the governor of New York to investigate a mysterious attempted robbery of the Robert Slyke home at Circle Lake, near Saratoga, and to establish the guilt or innocence of two men in the penitentiary for the crime. A miscarriage of justice is suspected. Bartley finds in the resting of an old case, is interested and agrees to solve the mystery. With his friend Pitt, a newspaper man, Bartley goes to Circle Lake, the pair becoming the guests of Bob Cuffie, an old friend. The three visit the Slyke home. Slyke reveals Bartley's coming, saying he is satisfied the two men in prison are guilty. Bartley is not. Next morning Slyke is found dead in bed, apparently having shot himself. Miss Potter, the dead man's sister-in-law, the village police chief, Cuffie, and the family physician, Doctor King, all agree Slyke killed himself but Bartley insists he was murdered.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

"When you look at the pillow," he explained, "on which his head lies, you will find only one or two spots of blood. The shirt, in fact, has none at all. The wound must have bled some—not much, it is true, but far more than it seems to have done from the appearance of the bed. He was killed elsewhere and placed in this bed afterwards. I doubt if he was even undressed at the time of his death."

Miss Potter, who had remained silent although obviously very nervous, asked if she might go to her room and leave the doctor in charge. This delegating of her authority to the doctor did not appeal to Roche; and he told her that, if her brother-in-law had been murdered, it would be the police and not the doctor who would take charge of things. The ordeal through which she had passed must have been more than she could stand, for she made no comment on his challenge but started to leave the room.

"Miss Potter," Bartley asked, as she reached the door, "did you ever see this revolver in Mr. Slyke's hand?" She hesitated a moment and then replied, "It's Mr. Slyke's; he was in the habit of keeping it in a drawer of his desk. The gun was brought soon after the burglary, but, so far as I know, he has never used it."

Although her statement that the revolver had belonged to the dead man made the suicide theory plausible, yet I could not quite see how the facts that Bartley had brought forward to disprove the suicide could be overthrown.

"What makes you think, Mr. Bartley," Roche asked, "that Slyke was dressed at the time he was killed?"

Bartley answered: "If Slyke had been killed in bed there would have been more blood on the bedclothes than the few drops we see on the pillow. His nightshirt, too, if it had been worn at the time he was killed, would have had some traces of blood on it. There are no such stains. This, and the fact that death must have



Bartley Began a Search of the Room, Using a Small Glass Once or Twice as if He Were Looking for Finger-Prints.

been instantaneous, makes me feel sure that he was undressed after he was killed and then placed on the bed in the position in which we have found him."

Bartley began a search of the room, using a small glass once or twice as if he were looking for finger-prints. Slyke's clothes were hung over a chair, and one of his stockings had fallen to the floor. The way the gray suit lay on the chair made me wonder if Bartley was right when he said the murderer had undressed him after the crime. It looked so much as if it

had been carelessly flung there by a man preparing for bed.

After going through Slyke's pockets Bartley said slowly, "I have grave doubts if he was even killed in this room."

He continued to examine the room, searching the floor, looking into the drawers of the desk, examining the walls even; then he came back to the clothing. Picking up the blue silk shirt from the chair, he examined it a second time before he said: "I was right. He was not killed in this room. Here is the suit he wore. You will notice that all his clothing is placed on this chair in the manner that a man would naturally place it if he was undressing for bed. But there is no button in the front of his shirt to hold his collar, and one stocking is missing. Any man may lose a collar button, but if he does, that button will be dropped at the place where he undressed. No button is in this room. It was lost in the room in which he was dressed. We find his shoes here but only one stocking, and we naturally ask where is the other stocking. Then, too, there are no blood stains anywhere in this room. Though his wound did not bleed much, it must have bled some. These are the reasons why I say he was not killed in this room, or even undressed here."

His explanation seemed reasonable enough, yet somewhat mystifying. Why had the murderer taken all this trouble to undress Slyke, and why had he done it in some other room? The next question was just as puzzling. If Slyke had not been killed in this room, where had the crime taken place? As if he had read my thoughts, Roche suggested that as there was another room in the tower, we might see what could be found there.

The butler, who entered at this moment, did his best not to glance at the bed. He was holding with great difficulty a half-grown Alfrede that growled fiercely when he saw us. The butler motioned to the doctor to come to him. As he reached his side, Doctor King placed his hand upon the dog's head and it ceased to show its teeth and licked his fingers. For several moments he and the butler held a low conversation, then King turned to us to say that he had just been called to the hospital for an operation and would have to leave at once.

Bartley scribbled something on a piece of paper, and handing it to the doctor said, "I think there ought to be a picture taken of the body so it can be used at the inquest."

The doctor agreed and went out, accompanied by the butler. As the door closed behind them Bartley went to look it, but the key was missing. After a moment's hesitation he decided it would do no harm to leave it unlocked while we were gone, and we all started for the floor above.

The room we entered was of the same size as the one in which we had found Slyke. Here, too, there was little furniture—three chairs grouped around a little table in the center of the room, a lounge in one corner, a small desk in another. It was the table that attracted Bartley's attention. On it stood a half-emptied bottle of Scotch whisky, and beside the bottle three glasses, one of them holding about a spoonful of liquor. Near one of the glasses was a half-smoked cigarette and a magazine, and on the opposite side of the table the stub of a cigar. Bartley looked at both of them with keen interest and finally placed them in an envelope. The cigarette must have been a very high-priced one, for the end was of the finest straw. The appearance of the table suggested that three men had been present and that two of them had been smoking. A conference, perhaps, at which a bottle of whisky had assisted. Aside from the table, there seemed to be nothing of interest in the room.

While Bartley was still glancing at the table, I walked over to the large window and drew aside the heavy curtain that reached to the floor. At my feet was a playing card that had been concealed by its folds. Glancing around to see if there were any others and finding none, I brought the card to Bartley.

As I stepped to his side, I saw that he was examining the magazine. Like many magazines, the back carried a gaudy advertisement that covered the entire page. This one had an unusual amount of unused white space. Bartley pointed silently to where someone had idly amused himself by drawing on it with a pencil, a habit many people have. The design was simple, only a mass of scrolls, with a little figure here and there, and lines running through them.

Whatever it meant to Bartley, the mass of zeros held no significance to me. He did not enlighten me, but

placed the magazine in his pocket. Then I showed him the playing card and told him where I found it. He asked, "Are there no more?" I was answering, "No," when Roche interrupted, "Yes, there is one."

He pointed to the stairway that led to the top of the tower. There, lying under the bottom step, was a second playing card with the same design on the back as the one I had found. What were they doing in that room? Bartley smiled to himself as he examined the second card.

Roche asked, "What do they mean?" With a gesture that might have meant anything, it was so expressive, Bartley replied, "They had a card party downstairs last night."

Roche was excited in a moment. "I'll tell you what it means. Someone at that party killed Slyke, followed him up here and killed him."

It was not a half-bad theory, and even Bartley did not protest as much as I had thought he would. Instead he said, "There is something in what you say, Roche. We must look first for the person who had the chance to kill him. You assume that after the party the person who dropped these cards did what any absent-minded person might do. That is, he placed the cards of his left hand in his pocket. He may have followed Slyke up here, hidden behind the curtain, and as he killed him dropped some of his cards on the floor."

He paused, half frowning, as if the theory did not quite appeal to him, and added slowly, "Still, Roche, there are other things to be considered. Those two cards are in different parts



"There Must Be Blood Spots Somewhere, Yet Where? There Are None in This Room."

of the room; not together as we might have expected if they had been dropped by accident. It looks to me as if they might have been placed where we found them by design. As if someone wished us to think just what you thought. Then there is that bottle of whisky and the three glasses. All three glasses have been drunk from. The glasses show that they were all used at about the same time. Evidently two of the men smoked; the third did not. What I wonder is, were these three persons in the room at one and the same time?"

Roche, who had long since lost his air of self-satisfaction, now offered to help us make a thorough examination of the room. When we had ended our unsuccessful search, Bartley stood silent, a puzzled expression on his face.

"It's more mysterious than ever," he said at last. "I am sure he was not killed in the room below. I am also sure he was not killed here. There must be blood spots somewhere, yet where? There are none in this room."

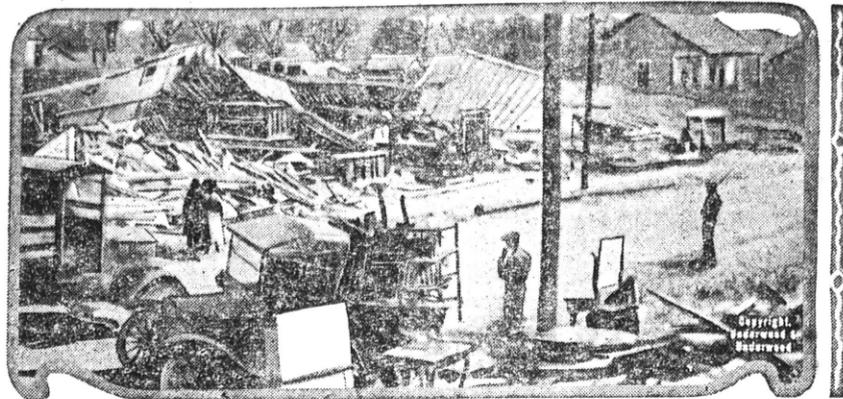
He went to the window and glanced out, then came back and glanced up at the steps that led to the roof. All at once his face brightened, and motioning us to follow him he bounded up the seven steps to the little door that opened onto the balcony. We followed more slowly.

We found ourselves on a balcony some four feet wide that ran around the tower. About eight or ten feet below its bronze-tipped top, an iron railing protected the edge of the balcony and was covered with ivy, as were also the sides of the tower itself. Bartley paused for a moment, standing with his hand on the rail, his face serious, his eyes thoughtful. But it was for a moment only; the next he was out of sight around the tower. Almost instantly we heard him call us, and when we reached his side he was on his knees examining the floor and the lower part of the wall. Looking where he pointed, I saw at his feet a dark splotch on the floor of the balcony, and a little higher up several similar spots on the wall of the tower. I realized that, at last, we had found what he had been looking for. There was no doubt that the splotches we saw were blood, and that it had been shed within a few hours. Had he expected to find them just where he did? I wondered.

"You say I know who killed him—I know?"

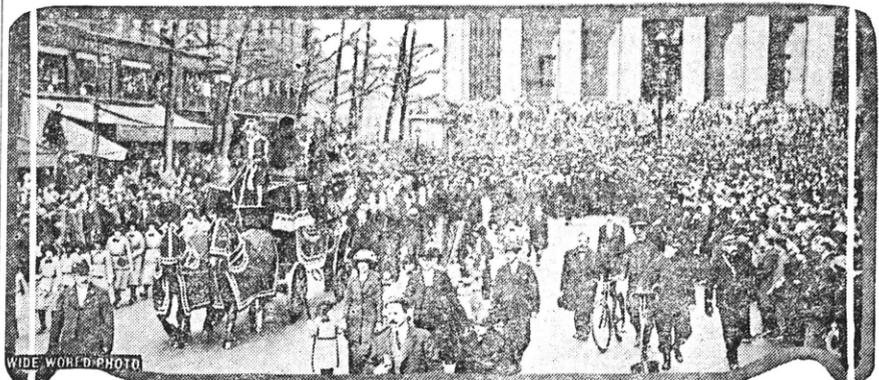
(TO BE CONTINUED.)
The Days of Real Sport.
Overhead in the subway—First Salvation Army lass to second ditto—"I'm at the army school now; I'm reading Deuteronomy—it's lovely!"—From the Outlook.

Where Louisiana Cyclone Did Most Damage



Scene in Pineville, La., after the passage of the cyclone that swept across the central part of the state. Nearly a score of persons were killed and the property damage was heavy.

Bernhardt's Funeral Passing the Madeleine



Vast throngs turned out in Paris to pay a last tribute to Sarah Bernhardt, the celebrated tragedienne. The photograph shows the funeral procession passing the Church of the Madeleine in Paris.

ACCUSED BY HUSBAND



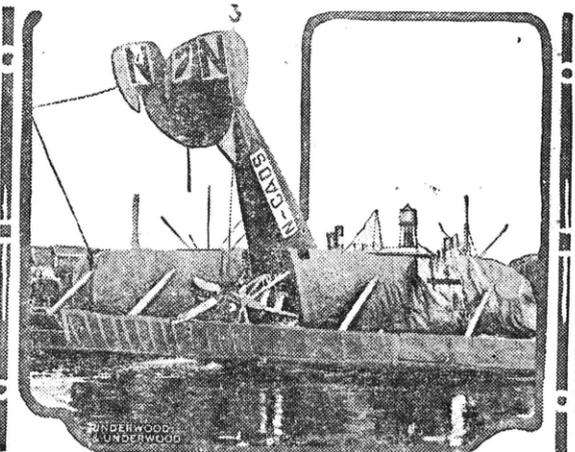
The current sensation in England is the suit of Capt. Wilfred Hugh Julian Gough against his wife, Sybil Phyllis, daughter of the lord of Cawston, proclaimed by Augustus John, E. O. Hoppe and other noted artists and beauty experts to be the most beautiful woman in England, and known in New York for a recent brief escapade where she was feted by the Vanderbilts and Belmonts and joined the chorus of a Broadway musical comedy and suddenly left it. Three men, Baron de Rothschild and Riedelcker, both immensely wealthy financiers, and the noted painter, Augustus John, are said to be named in the suit.

WIFE WED HER STEPMON



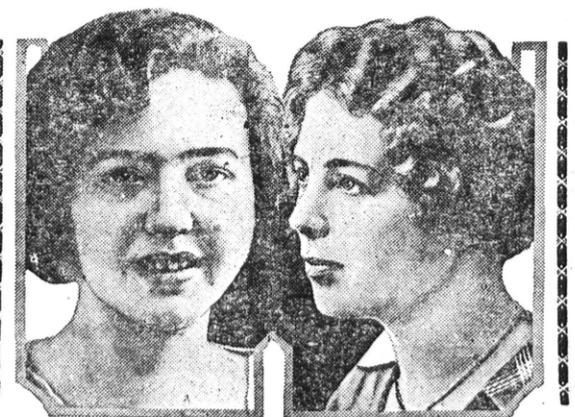
On one of his frequent European trips, the Maharajah of Kapurthala, one of the richest princes in India, saw Anita Delgado dancing in Spain. They were married in Paris. Later she got a divorce. It was reported that the settlement with the Maharajah included \$5,000,000 and a quantity of gems. As soon as her divorce decree is made absolute she will marry her stepson and the Maharajah's heir. The story of this woman, still beautiful at thirty-five, and the Indian prince, who is thirty, is the opening romance of the Paris season.

Mail Plane That Dove Into the Ocean



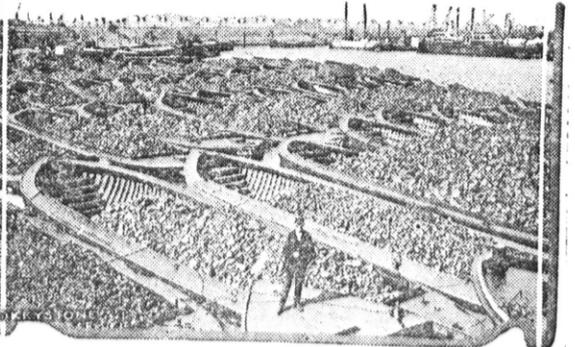
Eddie Hubbard, United States mail pilot, was seriously injured when his plane became unmanageable and did a nose dive of several hundred feet into the ocean while he was carrying Oriental mails from the Admiral liner President Grant to Seattle. The timely arrival of a fast motor boat saved Hubbard's life, for he was unconscious when picked up. The photograph shows the wrecked plane on a scow.

Accusers of House of David Head



Glady's Bamford Rubel (right) and Ruth Bamford Reed, sisters, are suing Benjamin Purnell, head of the House of David colony at St. Joseph, Mich., for \$200,000 in the Michigan courts. They accuse the "King" of ruining their lives during their childhood.

Britain Sends Coal to Germany



Since the occupation of the Ruhr by the French much of the coal used by the rest of Germany has been imported from Great Britain, and the consequent rise in the price of fuel in England gave rise to heated protest there. The photograph shows British coal in the port of Hamburg.